

A Tale of Three Cities

For three Missouri towns, it's the morning after the first city-wide legislation limiting smoking in public places

Springfield—

At one time or another, many of us working in tobacco use prevention have struggled with the notion that no one cared about our issue—especially the mainstream media. Lately, this is not the case in Springfield, Missouri.

Since the passage of a city-wide smoking ordinance there last spring, tobacco use prevention has been one of the hot, maybe the hottest, topics of discussion on the street, on the airwaves, across lunch counters, down at city hall, just about anywhere and everywhere conversation happens. In a sense, Springfield is conducting a clinic on the molding of public opinion. The outcome is far from determined, but the numbers bode well for the forces favoring clean indoor air.

Delores Joyce, TUP Springfield area coordinator, has kept track of all the media the ordinance has generated.

Since July, the count is 54 newspaper articles (six from surrounding towns), 18 television features, and two radio shows for a total of 74 media pieces generated by this one event for just the past three months. And while it is no doubt thorough, Delores'

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—Delores Joyce

tracking is not scientific and as such is likely a conservative accounting. She hasn't taken into account the wire service stories that have played across the state and even nationwide, nor the mere mentions on newscasts or debates that may have taken place on talk radio shows, in cars, across dinner tables, and in barber shops.

Suffice it to say that throughout the summer of '03, Springfield has been talking—about things like secondhand

smoke, things that are preventable causes of death and disease, and the right to choose the air you breathe while you work for and spend your hard-earned pay. Of course the genesis of all this news is the ordinance that banned smoking in restaurants with some exceptions, which amounted to allowing it in some. The compromise, as usual, has been anything but with both sides calling for re-writing the entire ordinance.

“We're back to the table,” said Joyce. “The mayor has formed a task force to develop a compromise solution between both parties. If that doesn't work, it may go to a vote of the people next fall.”

Joyce said the task force is made up of 8-10 members from both sides of the issue—clean indoor air advocates (total ban) versus representatives of the restaurant industry (leave it up to owners). “They (the task force) have a difficult job,” Joyce said. “The deadline has been extended several times, but they've done a good job so far.” She said the industry side asked the

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New Tobacco Study Finds Missouri Youth Playing With Fire

Some Missouri school children feel they “need a cigarette every day.”

Missouri kids believe that tobacco is as addictive as cocaine or heroin, yet most have gone ahead and tried it anyway, according to a ground-breaking study recently conducted by the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS). The study also found that a

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Ordinances

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health department for scientific, unbiased information about secondhand smoke and they also have sought out as much information as possible, pro and con, about air filtration systems.

Joyce said along with the information about things like expensive and complicated negative air pressure systems, the task force was told that the next big health issue was likely to be workplace air quality, and that could render an investment in a filtration system a total waste.

Joyce says the issue has a long way to go and anything can happen, but the health advocates like their position and the direction of the public discourse. "We are standing our ground," she said. "And most news reports now refer to it as a public health issue."

A recent poll funded by the Missouri Partnership on Smoking or Health and conducted by Southwest Missouri State University (SMSU) students seems to agree with Joyce's opinion. According to the SMSU poll, almost three-quarters (73%) of registered voters in Springfield believe that a person's right to breathe clean air is more important than a person's right to smoke. The SMSU numbers certainly look accurate in light of the fact that the U.S. Centers for Disease Control estimates that about one-quarter (26.5%) of Missouri adults are

smokers, and that would mean that three-quarters of Missouri adults don't plan on lighting up before, during, or after dinner anytime soon.

Maryville—

Jamie Baker, who is the TUP community policy specialist for the Northwest District and

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Kansas City, reports that the Maryville city ordinance is experiencing the normal growing pains as factions who were opposed from the start continue to take potshots. She reports that her city council remains totally supportive, but resistance persists and occasionally threatens.

Negative testimony at a recent meeting prompted the city council, to restate their unwavering support. Baker says at least ten residents showed up to voice support and praise for the measure that prevents smoking inside all Maryville restaurants. Baker says she was buoyed by the fact that she'd never met at least half of the people who attended in support.

The newspaper runs a regular feature titled, *The Free Speech Hotline*. Baker says the

paper started the hotline so readers could register their feelings about the ordinance. She says the paper prints the text of all calls and that most of them are overwhelmingly positive in favor of, one could assume, both the right to speak freely as well as the right to breathe freely.

"This just emphasizes," Baker said, "that once your ordinance is passed, your job is not over." She added that local coalition members were honored to have received news that the Maryville ordinance has just made the Americans for Nonsmoker's Rights' list of approved municipal ordinances nationwide.

St. Louis—

St. Louis Area Coordinator Pat Lindsey reports that the ban on smoking inside all city-owned property in St. Louis is progressing normally with no foreseeable roadblocks for the late October adoption date.

"Everyone has known it was coming for a long time," Lindsey said.

Lindsey and her coalition members have been working with some of St. Louis' largest employers in the automotive manufacturing industry to help them adopt similar regulations inside their plants. Lindsey reports that negotiations between representatives of the unions and the management of General Motors are going well, but that

they have run into an old nemesis: measurement of nicotine levels in the air of the plants. GM union leadership wants levels tested before proceeding. The union will support a ban on indoor smoking pending the results of the testing. The GM plant is about 79 acres of enclosed workspace.

Lindsey says they learned a few hard lessons the last time they delved into testing nicotine levels. That was to test the air in Lambert-St. Louis International Airport. The University of California at Berkeley had contracted with the city to do that testing, but the procedure was so time consuming that the full results that were needed didn't arrive in time. The city moved on without the full results from UC-Berkeley. This time, Lindsey vows, they will use a more accessible contractor.

She reported that the Ford plant didn't seem to have as many problems with limiting smoking inside its plants due, in part, to many limitations already in place because of the presence of combustible materials in many of their facilities. Members of the coalition and health department are meeting with Chrysler officials this month.

Lindsey also reports that an alderman with the city of Ballwin is proposing an ordinance that will ban smoking in all restaurants inside the Ballwin city limits. The proposed ordinance would, however, exempt all bars. ■

Youth

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high percentage of Missouri kids who use tobacco reported being part of a culture of tobacco use.

"We should not shrug off these findings with a usual kids-will-be-kids reaction," said Janet Wilson, chief of the DHSS Health Promotion Unit. "This is a youthful indiscretion that many of our children will not outgrow."

Wilson said this study was undertaken because similar studies of adults have found that 80 percent of adult regular smokers actually begin the habit before the age of 18. This new study, called the Missouri 2003 Youth Tobacco Survey, used self-reported data obtained from approximately 3,000 randomly selected Missouri middle and high school students. This is the first study to document the influences

and beliefs about tobacco and tobacco use among Missouri youth.

Researchers found that almost all Missouri middle and high school students believe a person can get addicted to tobacco the same as with cocaine or heroin, yet almost half (44%) of Missouri middle school students and more than half (66%) of Missouri high school students have used some form of tobacco.

The study also found that the overwhelming percentage of students who consider themselves to be current smokers have much more exposure to smoking than do students who have never smoked. Among current smokers in middle school, 90% reported that one or more of their closest friends also smoked. Only 17% of nonsmoking middle school children reported having a close friend

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Jefferson City Councilman Proposes Ordinance

The Jefferson City Council is getting its first formal look at a draft of a new clean air ordinance. The measure lists 29 locations where smoking would be prohibited, including banks, classrooms, healthcare and daycare facilities, malls, restaurants and theaters. It also includes bars, pool halls and virtually all places of employment. It was drafted by Councilman Clyde Angle.

The only areas exempt from the ban would be

motel rooms, tobacco shops and homes. When asked if the public was ready for the ordinance, Angle said, "I believe so. Certainly, it's an issue that needs to be addressed. It's a health issue, and I think nationwide there is a movement for people to stand up and say they have the right to breathe smoke-free air."

Angle hopes for a council vote on the smoking ban in early November. ■

Missouri Gets an F

A report released September 30, 2003, by the National Women's Law Center and the Center for Women's Health at Oregon Health & Science University found that most states are failing to meet the nation's goals for reducing smoking among women and girls, and too few states have adopted strong tobacco control policies to help them meet these goals. The report gives failing grades to 39 states—Missouri was among those states. The nation, and Missouri, received an overall grade of "Fail."

The report, "Women and Smoking: A National and State-by-State Report Card," grades the health indicators against ten-year national health objectives set by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' *Healthy People 2010* prevention agenda. The *Healthy People 2010* agenda identifies the most significant preventable threats to health and establishes national goals to reduce these threats.

The study found the following:

- States that have aggressive tobacco prevention programs show greater decreases in tobacco consumption than those states that do not allocate resources to tobacco prevention. Only four states (ME, MD, MN, and MS) fund tobacco prevention annually at a level that falls within the Centers for Disease Control's recommended range. Four states (MI, **Missouri**, TN, and DC) have not committed any annual funds to tobacco prevention.

- About 21 percent of women in the United States smoke, falling far short of the national goal to reduce smoking among adults to 12 percent.

- Smoking among girls in grades 9-12 is almost 28 percent—short of the national goal of 21 percent for this population. A recent DHSS survey has confirmed that **Missouri** girls rank equally with this national average (27.9% used some form of tobacco).

- Only Utah (11.6 percent) meets the goal to reduce smoking among women to 12 percent. Nevada ranks last with 28.5 percent of women smoking, and over two-thirds of the states join Nevada in receiving an "F."

- Every year, smoking-related diseases kill more than 178,000 women and cause women to lose more than two million years of life due to premature death.

- Smoking is the primary cause of lung cancer, which kills more women than any other form of cancer, even breast cancer. Smoking is also a primary risk factor for cardiovascular disease, which is the leading overall killer of women.

- The economic costs of smoking are also devastating—while states spend nearly \$12 billion in Medic-

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Youth

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who was a smoker. The percentage (85%) of middle school current smokers who reported having recently ridden in a car with someone who was smoking was more than twice the percentage (40%) of nonsmoking students who had that experience. These types of comparisons were similar for high school students: for instance, almost all (86%) high school current smokers reported having ridden in a car with someone who was smoking in the past week, compared with less than a third (32%) of high school nonsmokers who had done that.

Another striking disparity between school-age smokers and nonsmokers is found in their embrace of tobacco company advertising. Among middle school nonsmokers, barely 15 percent said they would sport a tobacco company logo, whereas almost two-thirds (62%) of the middle school smokers would do so. The difference was almost identical for high school respondents: a mere 19 percent of nonsmokers, compared to 63 percent of smokers, said they would have no qualms about wearing or using anything with a tobacco company name or picture on it.

The study also documents evidence of how quickly the use of tobacco can become habit-forming. Among the current-smoker students, almost a third (32%) of middle and

nearly half (45%) of high school kids reported feeling like they needed a cigarette every day. More than half of middle (52%) and almost two-thirds (61%) of high school students reported having tried to quit smoking at least once during the 12 months prior to the survey.

"We can't afford," Wilson said, "to ignore the reality that Missouri has some of the highest rates of smoking, which is the leading cause of death and disease and is totally preventable."

The survey results have quickly been integrated into prevention efforts around the state. In Kansas City, survey numbers proved valuable at the recent school tobacco policy workshop. In the Northeast, Community Policy Specialist Joyce Lara uses the survey in her Smokebusters training classes for youth. In both the Maryville and St. Joseph School Districts, the survey results will be highlighted in interactive activities that are designed to spur debate among students, parents and community leaders.

Additional findings from the study can be found on the DHSS website at: http://www.dhss.state.mo.us/SmokingAndTobacco/Youth_Use.pdf or a printed copy can be obtained by calling the DHSS' Tobacco Use Prevention Program, toll-free at

1-866-726-9926. ■

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aid costs that are attributable to smoking, the federal government spends over \$20 billion in Medicare costs in addition to their share of Medicaid costs.

Twelve percent of women nationwide smoke during pregnancy, far short of the national goal to reduce smoking during pregnancy to no more than one percent. No state meets this goal, but the District of Columbia comes close with 2.6 percent of pregnant women smoking, while West Virginia ranks last, with 26.3 percent.

Only 28 states have toll-free quitlines with specific information to help pregnant women quit smoking even though research has shown quitlines to be effective.

The U.S. Public Health Service has found that smoking cessation treatment is both clinically effective and cost-effective and recommends that both private and public health insurers cover such treatment. Yet only seven states' Medicaid programs cover comprehensive cessation treatment (FLA, IN, KS, ME, MN, OR, and WV).

Only five states (CA, DE, MD, NY, and VT) have strict laws that prohibit smoking in almost all public indoor sites even though research has suggested that such prohibitions significantly reduce the risk of smoking-related diseases. **Missouri's** law allows designated smoking areas.

Research has shown that a ten percent increase in the price of cigarettes leads to an estimated seven percent reduction in youth smoking. Yet only five states (CT, MA, NJ, NY, and RI) have an excise tax on cigarettes of at least \$1.50 per pack, a measure that could dramatically reduce youth smoking.

Missouri's tobacco excise tax is 17 cents. ■

Going Global — *Far-flung tobacco issues*

New York Still Fun

New York, NY—Findings from a recent poll conducted by the New York City Coalition for a Smoke-Free City indicate that 83 percent of New Yorkers say they are going to bars and clubs as frequently as before the smoking ban, and 35 percent say they attend bars and clubs more frequently because of the ban.

Saliva Test Helps Smokers Quit

Birmingham, England—Scientists at Birmingham University say a simple 10-minute test could help thousands of people give up smoking. They say the results shock people into giving up the habit.

By testing saliva, the amount of nicotine a smoker is inhaling can be measured and the results are color coded and given to smokers.